

HOME WORKING POLICY AND GUIDELINES

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CONSULTATION SCHEDULE

Name and Title of Individual	Groups consulted	Date Consulted
	Staff Engagement Group	June 2019
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VERSION CONTROL

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1	North Staffs & Stoke on Trent Home working Policy	Nov 2016	Caroline Lawrence
2	Amended to include 4 CCGs in South Staffs & added in Equality statement		Jane Chapman
3			
4			

Impact Assessments – available on request

	Stage	Complete	Comments
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1. Formal /Regular Home Working

- 1.1. The CCGs recognise that home working can bring advantages both to the employee and to the organisations. These may include flexibility around better use of time, reduced costs, freedom from transport problems (including reasonable adjustments for employees with mobility problems), ease pressure on accommodation, car parking and ecological benefits. Homeworking should not be used in place of caring responsibilities.
- 1.2. Regular home working may be considered as a long-term arrangement. It may also be considered if someone is unable to get to work - e.g. because of accident or injury, or part of a 'return to work' policy. It should not be used where medical opinion is that the person is unfit for work.
- 1.3. Home working may not be appropriate for all posts. For example, the type of job the employee does may not be appropriate or possible to do outside of the office and service requirements may mean that the employee needs to be present in the office.
- 1.4. Home working may also not suit every employee. The employee must be self-motivated and disciplined to enable them to deal with home distractions that may interrupt the home working ability. Home working will therefore be considered at the discretion of the employee's line manager and is not an automatic entitlement. Should a request for home working be declined, the line manager will provide the employee with the reasons for this, a further request would be considered after three months.
- 1.5. Staff considered for regular home working will normally have a satisfactory attendance record and punctuality pattern, either with the CCGs or evidenced from a previous employer if new in post. HR advice should be sought in cases where staff have repeated short term absences or any long term absences through sickness.
- 1.6. Individuals wishing to work from home on a formal/regular basis must make a request in writing to their line manager and complete the Application Form at Appendix 1 and Self-Assessment Form at Appendix 3. The line manager will assess the service delivery needs. If approved, the line manager will confirm in writing to the individual.
- 1.7. A formal review should take place at least every 3 - 6 months by the individual's line manager to ensure that home working is still the best way of working for the employee and to ensure that outputs are consistent with the arrangement. During the review a manager needs to evaluate if the job has changed since it was originally approved for home working. If it has it may no longer be suitable for home working and should therefore revert back to being office based. In these cases a minimum of one week's notice will be given.
- 1.8. The home worker would be responsible for ensuring that they fulfil the confidentiality clause and Information Governance processes within their contract of employment whilst working at home.
- 1.9. Home working for the purpose of this policy refers to time spent working at home rather than on CCGs premises or other work premises.

2. Ad-hoc Home Working

2.1. A flexible worker with occasional home working would mean that you have an office space at CCGs premises and would use your home as a base on an ad-hoc basis, duties could include writing and reading reports, typing of minutes etc. Homeworking should not be used in place of caring responsibilities.

2.2. This working arrangement may happen on a regular basis but would only be for a minor part of the employee's time and for a full time employee would amount to no more than 2 days per month on average. If this limit is exceeded, the employee would need to consult with their line manager who would seek advice from Human Resources. It is not necessary to complete an application form for one-off/ad hoc home working.

3. Scope

3.1. The CCGs will ensure that the application of any part of this policy does not have the effect of discriminating, directly or indirectly, against staff who share a protected characteristic. The application of this policy will apply equally to full and part-time staff.

3.2. An employee may request assistance with this policy if they have special needs. If the employee has language difficulties because English is not their first language the use of an interpreter will be considered.

4. Equality statement

This policy has been assessed in relation to having due regard to the (1) the Public Sector Equality Duty three aims dropping down from the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, harassment victimisation, advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations, (2) the Health and Social Care Act 2012 re evidencing showing due regard to reducing health inequalities between the people of England.

5. Costs

5.1. If the employee has not been issued with a mobile phone by the CCGs the costs of legitimate phone calls will be met on production of an itemised bill.

5.2. Normally, no other costs arising from home working will be reimbursed. Where required, the employee is expected to use stationery and equipment provided by the office and should deliver mail to the office for dispatch. However, in exceptional circumstances the CCGs may contribute to other costs if agreed by the line manager.

6. Application Procedure

6.1. To apply for regular home working, the employee would need to discuss the request with their line manager and complete the application form found in Appendix 1. The

employee should ensure that adequate notice is given to the line manager prior to the agreement of the commencement of the period of home working. All reasonable requests to work at home will be considered in line with the wider team, other requests and the service needs.

6.2. Work carried out at home would not normally be considered as overtime.

6.3. Employees at Senior Manager level or above may request a 'blanket' permission to work at home when they consider it necessary for a particular task. This may be subject to an agreed limit of a number of occasions per month. If the request is accepted, the line manager should consult with HR. This will ensure that the manager is made aware of their responsibilities in terms of communication, training and relevant procedures for home working. They would then need to meet with the employee to ensure that they are made aware of the implications and their responsibilities whilst home working e.g. Health & Safety issues, insurance, confidentiality and communication. A self-assessment checklist is attached as Appendix 3.

7. Authorisation

7.1. The employee must gain approval from their line manager to commence home working after completion of the application form (Appendix 1). Approval for home working is at the line manager's discretion and must meet the needs of the business. The line manager should ensure that the employee's absence from the office does not cause problems for other staff.

7.2. If the application is not approved the employee will have the right of appeal through the CCGs Grievance Policy.

8. Contact:

The employee must inform appropriate colleagues of when they are working at home and include any periods of home working in all diaries. The employee must also provide details of how they may be contacted during this time with the expectation that a mobile phone number is provided as the main contact.

9. Meetings

Employees should ensure that they make every effort to making themselves available to attend meetings organised by colleagues or external organisations. Home working should not be allowed to interfere with the availability of the relevant employee to participate in such meetings, nor provide obstacles to convening meetings because of the limited number of days that the employee is in the office.

10. Health and Safety

The CCGs have a statutory duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 which states that an employer shall ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health,

safety and welfare at work of all employees. This places obligations on home workers themselves to do their work in such a way as to ensure that they and any other person, including members of the household, or the public, will not be exposed to risks to their health and safety.

The employee will be required to certify that the working environment will be safe and adequate for the purpose and that s/he will take all steps necessary for safe working and a safe environment for all occupiers of the employee's home. Equipment used by the home worker (whether owned by the CCG or provided by the home worker) must be safe to use and not give rise to risks to health and safety.

11. Security and Confidentiality

11.1. The CCGs would need to ensure Data Protection Regulations are met, whether an employee has use of their own computer or a CCG computer, agreeing a code of conduct and carrying out a risk assessment of their workstation at home. CCG's security and confidentiality rules would apply to all home workers and breaches would be dealt with under the CCG's disciplinary policy and any other relevant policies.

11.2. Home workers must ensure that all equipment owned by the CCGs, including correspondence files, are kept secure, including all NHS property in transit. The CCGs will require the employee to certify that s/he is able to maintain security and confidentiality of documents within the home and comply with IT security and data protection requirements.

11.3. The CCGs reserve the right to take all reasonable steps necessary to verify this. A condition for home working is that the CCGs will have right of access to the premises for this purpose although this will be done sensitively and with appropriate notice.

12. Accidents, Incidents and Dangerous Occurrences

Employees working at home must inform their manager in the event of accidents, incidents or dangerous occurrences. Initial reports should be by telephone, followed by appropriate action. The home worker should also complete a CCG incident form.

13. Insurance

It is the responsibility of the employee to ensure that all relevant household insurances are in place to enable working from home.

14. Sickness Absence

The CCGs policy on sickness absence would apply to all home workers. It is particularly important that any periods of sickness absence whilst working at home are reported to the relevant line manager in line with the Absence Management Policy.

15. Hours of Work

The hours and working pattern should be agreed with the line manager prior to commencement of home working ensuring that the employee does not work in excess of their normal working hours during home working and are in line with Working Time Regulations 1998.

16. Base

The employee's base will always remain at the CCG head office, where their workstation will be maintained.

17. Review

The arrangement will be subject to a first review after the first 3 months. If before the first review, the outputs from the employee are not adequate the line manager can terminate the arrangement with one week's notice

18. Termination

This arrangement will be reviewed between 3 and 6 months at agreed intervals and may be terminated at any time by either the employee or the CCG.

APPENDIX 1

Application for Formal/Regular Home Working

Please note: it is not necessary to complete an application form for one-off/ad hoc home working

Name:	
Job title:	
Directorate:	
Line Manager:	
I would like to apply for home working on the following basis:	
I wish to work at home on an ongoing basis on the following days:	
Every Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday/Friday (<i>delete as appropriate</i>) (Part-time staff) I normally work: Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday/Friday	
Arrangements for dealing with phone calls:	
Arrangements for dealing with E-mails:	
Arrangements for ensuring the security of confidential information:	
Arrangements for dealing with letters and other correspondence:	
Arrangements for managing staff in your team:	
Arrangements for contact with your line manager:	
I believe there will be no detriment to the service for the following reason(s):	
I understand that the CCGs will not pay any costs of working from home other than those highlighted in the policy	
I have read and understood and agree to the CCGs and guidelines on home working.	
Signed:	
Date:	
Agreed/not agreed by (Line Manager) If not agreed – state reason;	
Date:	
Review date (within 3 months of request)	

Before a formal application is made, the employee must have discussed the situation in detail with her/his line manager.

APPENDIX 2

Health and Safety Guidance Notes

1. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HASAW Act) requires all employers to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health safety and welfare at work of all employees. This duty is extended to employees working at home.
2. The HASAW Act also places a duty on employees to carry out the work in such a way as to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, that persons not in their employment are not exposed to risks to their health and safety. These include other members of the household and members of the public.
3. To ensure that these duties are exercised, the CCGs may carry out a risk assessment of the proposed area of work and equipment, in the employee's home to ensure the safety of the employee, her/his family and members of the public.

The home worker will undertake a self-assessment/risk assessment prior to the agreement being finalised which will be completed by the manager with the guidance of the CCGs Health and Safety advisors. Thereafter it is essential that the risk assessments are managed as if the employee were based in CCG premises.

4. When employees work from home, close supervision will not be possible. There is therefore a greater responsibility upon home workers to ensure that work is carried out without risk to themselves or others.
5. Any action taken by the CCGs to implement the HASAW Act (and subsequent legislation) will equally apply to employees working at home.

APPENDIX 3

HOMEWORKING – SELF ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Name:	Date of completion:
Address:	Job Title: Department:

Fire	Yes	No	Comments
Is the work area tidy?			
Are exit routes clear?			
Do you have an escape plan?			
Is a smoke alarm fitted?			

Electrical Equipment (either CCGs or your own but used for CCG work)	Yes	No	Comments
Any apparent damage?			
Any evidence of overheating?			
Any obvious damage to leads or plugs?			
Are the cables secure in all plugs?			

Slips Trips & Falls (work areas)	Yes	No	Comments
Floor coverings sound, and without Defects?			
Are walkways clear of tripping hazards, e.g. trailing cables?			
When seated at your desk can you move your legs & upper body together without twisting?			

Working Environment	Yes	No	Comments
Is the temperature comfortable?			
Is the ventilation comfortable?			
Do you have adequate lighting, including any necessary task lighting?			
Manual Handling	Yes	No	Comments
Do you carry out any abnormal manual handling activities?			
Have you undertaken the CCGs manual handling training?			

Display Screen Equipment	Yes	No	Comments
Do you use DSE for more than an hour a day on a regular basis?			
Are you aware of the CCGs policy on eye tests			

Working Alone	Yes	No	Comments
Have you discussed the need for a call in procedure with your manager?			
Do you carry a mobile phone or phone card?			

Accidents / First Aid	Yes	No	Comments
Do you know the procedure for reporting any accidents or work related illness?			
Do you have a first aid kit available when working at home?			

Security	Yes	No	Comments
Is final exit door secured by mortice deadlock?			
All other external doors similarly secured by morticed security bolts?			
Do key operated window locks secure all accessible windows? Laptop and Confidential files locked away when not in use?			

Any other comments you have regarding your working environment, please list here:-

Signature:

Date: